CHEAP SHOTS

Gay in House

"The fact is, we must somehow eliminate or cast aside hate, greed, hostility and hypocricy."

Rousing sentiments, but odd as a platform plank for someone fighting for a seat in the House of Representatives from Richland County. But Mrs. Gay Cothran is no ordinary candidate -- or non-candidate as the political parties may have it.

No sense of practical politics, Republican and Democratic party officers probably say; she just jumps on anybody if they do something she thinks dishonest or unfair. Republicans gave her a standing ovation at the county convention when she denounced the Democratic Party machine as the tool of a few corrupt men who want to rule the people rather than represent them.

That cheering section has quieted of late. Mrs. Cothran says she gets support-the-team talk when she is able to find Republican officers to talk about her candidacy and is exasperated that she has yet to meet with other GOPers that plan a serious campaign for the House.

"Who is the team? I can't have team spirit if I don't know the team." she shrugs, her features flashing like a mobile hung in a thunderstorm as she jumps from one subject to another. "And this numbered seats business is unconstitutional," in violation of the 1964 voting act that requires the U. S. Attorney General or the federal district court to approve or disapprove any measure affecting voters' rights, she says. (Attorney Thomas Broadwater, a United Citizens' Party member and Democratic candidate for the House, has challenged numbered seats in court.)

Mrs. Cothran, a black-haired woman bordering on being petite, conveys a sense of outrage at injustices and startles with her frankness. She is probably considered charming, but a bit wacko, by party pros more familiar with stud-poker politics. That frankness, however, is what makes Mrs. Cothran more than a wild-eyed idealist; it's a part of her solution for "fair government."

She wants a "more vocal legislature; more reports to the public" and this woman wouldn't put up with the BS usually offered up by politicians as public relations work rather than an attempt to inform the public.

And she is working hard to get a Republican nomination though she was once a country-family Democrat. She has finally rounded up a list of Republican convention delegates, asking support and recounting her frustrations working with GOP officers -- a tactic not likely to endear her to Republican brass. She refuses to believe that the Executive Committee will probably select candidates; and mandates from the people are hard to come by. She has the issues and she and student volunteers are working with no funds to speak of.

Cothran

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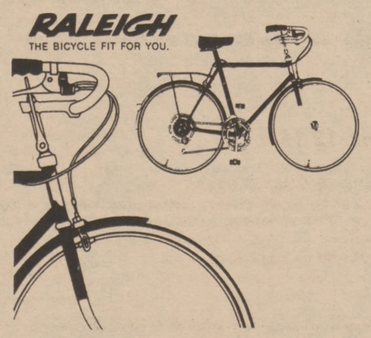

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Gadflying

That "liberal gadfly" John Bolt Culbertson is stinging anyone who gets in his way -- even the South Carolina Democratic Party.

Culbertson, a candidate for the United States Senate in the June 27 Democratic Primary, has won a suit filed before a three-judge federal panel charging that filing fees for the Democratic Primary were exorbitant and prohibited persons of limited means from offering themselves as candidates in the Democratic Primary. The suit also asked the Democratic Party to return all or part of Culbertson's $4,000 filing fee.

The judicial panel, which included former Democratic S. C. Governor Donald S. Russell, held that the Democrats would have to cut their filing fees, suggesting that two per cent of the annual salary for the office sought would be a sufficient amount for the party to charge as a filing fee. The panel also ruled that the Democrats must return partial filing fees.

S. C. Democratic Party Chairman Don Fowler flatly stated, upon hearing of the decision, that "this is a real blow to us." He also stated that the party would appeal the decision to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Culbertson is also picking up steam from a "broken promise" made by State Sen. Eugene N. "Nick" Zeigler, D-Florence, a John West "New South" liberal who is also vying for the Senate nomination. On May 22, the Charlotte Observer quoted Zeigler as saying, "I would debate him (Culbertson) anywhere he wants to debate."

Surprisingly, Culbertson appeared alone on a June 5 television show on a Greenville station to speak for his candidacy for the Senate seat. Where was Zeigler?

According to WFBC-TV spokesman Bob McAlister, the station invited both Culbertson and Zeigler to appear for the showing. As in the California debates with senators McGovern and Humphrey, newsmen would question the candidates on their "standing" on the issues. Either candidate could have rebuffed any charges made by the other during the meeting.

Zeigler, in a June 2 Charlotte Observer story, states that he turned down the offer for open debate because "time was too scarce."

The candidate did suggest that, "after the June 27 primary, when we have the luxury of five months before the general election..." he would be pleased to "debate the meaningful issues facing the people of South Carolina."

Culbertson, at any rate, was quite pleased with the TV offer and taped a 30-minute segment of "Report to the People" for the Greenville TV station. He appeared alone on the program with the reporters asking him the questions.

Thus, not only has Zeigler "broken a campaign promise" to debate his opponent, but he has allowed Culbertson 30 minutes of free television time by shunning the debate.

And, come Primary Day, Zeigler may learn that the voters won't be at all interested in hearing him debate anybody when the senator has "the luxury of five months before the general election." He may not even be a candidate for office at that time.

Demo deals

"Will George Wallace Deal?" asks an editorial in the June 3 Columbia Record. "Let's hope not" seems to be the editor's blunt answer to his rather blunt question.

The editor expressed some concern that Wallace just might strike up some deal -- other than for the vice-presidential seat -- with Senator George McGovern, D-S.D., the front runner in the race for the Democratic nomination. He further says that Wallace would be branded as a "Judas" were he to do such a thing.

Quite frankly, Southern Democrats (and Republicans for that matter) are afraid that George McGovern will arrive in Miami with the nomination sewed up.

Big-name Democrats in the South, including several governors, are apparently going to do "everything possible" -- including destroying the Democratic Party -- to stop McGovern.

One of the underlying reasons for this movement against McGovern is purely a personal one. McGovern, with his reforms in the Democratic delegate procedures, has challenged traditional Southern leaders and powerful Democratic machines which have lost control over the delegate selection.

Not surprisingly, one of the leaders in this group of "disturbed" Southerners is Governor John West. West, along with former Governor Robert McNair and Georgia's Jimmy Carter, seems to be spearheading the drive as a spokesman and chief "dealer" for the group.

Charles Wickenburg, public affairs editor of The State, stated that on May 31, West and ten other Southern governors met and decided to tell Alabama Governor Wallace that they would back him in any move to stop McGovern, even supporting Ted Kennedy if necessary. Wickenburg also reported that the governors refused to release a statement condemning McGovern because they felt such an action "would help him more in California than it would hurt."

Actually, Wallace seems to be faced with three alternatives which will influence the outcome of the November election.

One thing that Wallace could do is simply denounce the Democrats during the Miami convention. This would spell out total defeat for the Democrats in November, according to most party officials. If Wallace goes "fishing" in November, Richard Nixon is a shoe-in, so the thought goes.

What West and the Southern governors are looking for is a Wallace swing behind Hubert Humphrey. Even though Humphrey has stated that George Wallace would never be his running mate, the Hump is ready to dicker on the busing question -- something very dear to Wallace's heart.

What West, and maybe even Hube, is overlooking is that an antibusing stand is going to alienate millions of black voters and cut deeply into the minority vote on which Humphrey is counting quite heavily as he did in 1968.

But the third alternative is somewhat frightening to the Southern Democrats. Suppose McGovern cultured an alliance with Wallace. Reports are circulating that just such a union is possible.

According to this school of thought, McGovern would offer Wallace a solid position in his cabinet -- say Secretary of the Treasury -- and let the Alabama governor make good on his oft-repeated promise to reform our country's tax structure. Should Wallace elect the third alternative, he would be hailed as a peacemaker who overlooked his differences with the nominee in the name of unity and stopping Nixon.

At this point, Wallace does seem to command a sizable hold over the Democrats. If McGovern does win on the first ballot in Miami, however, John West and his "New South" liberalism will be put to the test.

And the Republican Party could be quite hard to stop in November if the Democrats are stunned into silence because Wallace moved in the "wrong direction."

D-Day

Remember D-Day?

No, not June 6 -- the anniversary of the allied attack of Omaha Beach in Normandy during World War II.

Columbians, whether they know it or not, have another D-Day to celebrate. But, for this celebration, there aren't any big parades with flags waving and soldiers marching in the street.

As a matter of fact, a lot of people would rather forget this D-Day.

Richland County's D-Day falls on June 5. Two years ago on that date, candidates for the Democratic Primary met and endorsed two black candidates -- I. S. "Leevy" Johnson and James Felder -- for the House of Representatives.

White Columbians (mostly Republicans) were horrified. But a small number of white Democrats were even more horrified with the "dealings" carried out that infamous day.

What basically happened, according to legend, is this: "nearly all...candidates...." (which ones is a mystery although Lewis Cromer, county party chairman, did issue a statement to the press) met and endorsed the two men.

Four days later on primary day, a "ticket" appeared, especially in the black community, suggesting that the voter select certain candidates whose names were checked. Eighteen hours later, these same candidates had won the Democratic primary for their respective office.

Then, the deluge. S. C. Republican Party Chairman Ken Powell stated that the Democrats had the black vote "in the bag" for the general election. Powell further declared the Democrats "guilty of blatant racism by their own admission."

Interestingly, Powell gave his version of the D-Day session -- a remarkable job of news reporting for a man who probably wasn't there.

Powell's script for the meeting goes something like this: Rev. C. J. Whittaker, then party vice-chairman, met with all candidates and threatened that "black voters would go fishing" in November if Johnson and Felder didn't receive the endorsement. According to Powell, noted savant that he is, the black community demanded and received "its pound of flesh" that day.

But the alleged deal worked. The Democrats who were endorsed by the mysterious list of "Suggested Candidates" received the "mandate" from the people.

The Democrats' joy was short-lived however when Susie Newman, a Columbian who was defeated as a Democrat for a county council seat, unleashed a series of charges which -- besides benefitting the Republicans' chances for a "backlash" vote in November -- attacked two of the most influential Democrats in the county -- Cromer and County Treasurer Tom Elliott.

Ms. Newman charged Cromer with having "sold her out" by striking up a deal with the black community. She charged that Elliott, whom she had sought for advise, suggested that she allow a bootlegger and another "convicted criminal" aid her in her campaign.

Simply stated, county Republicans jumped on Ms. Newman's charges in another attempt to push for a large "backlash" vote. The "backlash" went fishing in November and the Democrats galloped off to another victory. And that was that -- for a while.

Apparently, everybody in Richland County has forgotten about D-Day. Except, maybe, for Susie Newman, Lewis Cromer, and Tom Elliott. For, as the second anniversary of that nefarious deal was fast approaching, Ms. Newman has again stirred up a fight. And again she has flatly stated that Cromer is responsible for her plight.

On June 1, Ms. Newman withdrew as a candidate for county council in the June 27 primary. She stated that she had entered the race under the supposition that the council would be enlarged to seven seats.

Suddenly, like a flash, Ms. Newman then named Sen. Hyman Rubin as the man responsible for her decision by defeating a bill which would have called for two more members of the council.

And she took the chance to get in another broadside at Lewis Cromer who is an announced candidate for the state senate as a Republican. By "attempting to rig" the 1970 election, Ms. Newman charged, Cromer had "cheated (her) out of office".

Both Cromer and Rubin handled the charges admirably. Both stated that Ms. Newman's decision to withdraw from the council race was her own decision. Rubin also charged that Ms. Newman had misrepresented his views concerning expansion of the council, explaining that the county delegation voted to support a proposal for a city-county merger.

What was missing from Ms. Newman's statement of charges was the attack leveled against Tom Elliott which she unleashed in 1970. Why didn't Ms. Newman continue her attack against the treasurer?

A clue to this can be found in another quote from Ms. Newman's June 1 statement. Ms. Newman said at that time that she certainly didn't want to oppose the three incumbents on the council.

Which is quite surprising. The three incumbents seeking re-election--Herbert Louthian, Stuart Hope, and John V. Green -- are considered "Elliott men" by many county politicos, but especially by a small group of Democrats who are rapidly leaving the party.

Ms. Newman, in the 1970 election, flatly charged Elliott with having connections with known criminals. Surely, with a good oldfashioned "clean up government" campaign, Ms. Newman could have defeated one of the three incumbents.

At any rate, the Republicans, with the recent acquisition of Cromer as a candidate for senate, won't be needing Ms. Newman this year -- especially with Cromer's charges that Elliott and a select group of "political pawns" run a corrupt machine as the basis for the county Democratic Party. (See Osceola No. 2 for Elliott's statements on this accusation.).

Is Susie Newman now one of Elliott's "political pawns"? Will the Republicans put the "fat cats" of the Democratic Party "out to pasture"? Or will Lewis Cromer be soundly flattened in his bid for a senate seat as every other Republican has been for the last 100 years?

As the web of suspense tightens its grasp around the county, stay tuned for the next exciting chapter of "St. Lewis Blues or The Amazing Flying Machine."

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osceola

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